

THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

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Only yesterday, as it were, the men of this world began to learn that animals immediately below them in the zoological scale have thoughts and feelings, temperaments and personalities, joys and sorrows. But even today they have not yet made a good beginning toward learning that the beasts and birds, the reptiles and the fishes have rights that even the dullest men are in honor bound to recognize and respect.—*Dr. William T. Hornaday.*

A BOY AND HIS DOG

PART II

By IDA KENNISTON

This story is a continuation of "A Boy and His Dog" in the November number of K. D. M.

SYNOPSIS OF "A BOY AND HIS DOG"

Angelo Spagliotti, who lived in the old "North End of Boston," had been arrested for stealing a bologna sausage for his faithful little dog "Rags." He knew that Rags was hungry.

Angelo told the Judge the whole story, how, when his own mother died, he had been left with a cruel step-father and his new wife. That Angelo's real name was Angus Gordon.

The Judge was very kind and though he showed Angus that stealing was wrong, even for his little dog, he was sure that Angus would not offend again, so he found a good new home for the boy and Rags, too. It was in Maine, with a lovely woman who was called "Aunt Nancy" by all the village.

Angus and Rags travel to Maine and there are met at the station by a nice Boy Scout, Ted Bunker, who takes them to Aunt Nancy's home.

This story will show you what happens there.

Rags was having a great time, chasing the kitten that lived next door. He didn't really mean to hurt the kitten—but it is good fun to chase cats—sometimes! It is the private opinion of many dogs that that is what cats are for!

The kitten scampered around the yard, the small dog after her, and then made a rush for a small tree. In a few seconds more the kitten was safe on a branch, with her back arched in angry defiance.

Rags stood at the foot of the tree and barked joyously. He had treed that impertinent young kitten, anyway! But O, why *couldn't* a dog climb a tree!

The dog's master whistled shrilly and called out, "Rags, come here!"

Rags at once came rushing over to the boy and wagged his tail cheerfully, as if to say, "Well, what next?"

"You *know* you are *not* to chase cats, Rags," said the boy sternly. But he caressed the little dog as he spoke. Rags knew his master was not really cross with him—just as the boy knew that Rags did not really mean to hurt the kitten.

Angus Gordon and his dog Rags had been living at Aunt Nancy's home in the little village of Tuckaway in Maine for nearly a month. It had been, on the whole, a happy month, a month of good times, plenty to eat, and long happy days out-of-doors. There was work, of course, for the boy, chopping kindling, bringing in wood, going errands for Aunt Nancy, weeding the young vegetable garden, feeding the hens and chickens, and the young turkeys. Rags was rather

afraid of the big "gobbler" turkey. That turkey acted as if he owned the place! There was plenty of time, too, for play, for Angus and Rags.

Angus, when he had lived with his stepfather and stepmother in the crowded Italian quarter of old Boston, had never had any real duties in the vacation time. He had to "mind the babies" more or less, of course,—the three younger children of "Pa" and "Ma" Spagliotti, but for most of the time he was free to roam about the streets.

That was how the boy had gotten into trouble, in his idle hours, and had been sent to Maine by the kind



Rags and the man have supper.

judge who had seen that the boy needed more wise and loving care than he received in his stepfather's home.

Angus had come to Aunt Nancy, firmly determined to "make good" and to show that he was a boy to be trusted. For the first time in his ten years of life, he had a room all to himself to sleep in. It was a pleasant room, with a soft, comfortable bed, with white

curtains at the windows, with simple furniture of old yellow maple. There were some bookshelves, too, with some real "boys' books." The books had belonged to Aunt Nancy's sons when they were school boys.

In the pleasant, sunny hall of the house, there was a large map of the United States hanging on the wall. Some one had marked on it with a heavy blue pencil a route from the home in Maine clear across the country—to a certain city in California. It was not a straight line, of course; it turned and bent and went here and there as you have seen the railroad lines marked out on some maps. The line went through many cities and across many states. This was a map of the route that Aunt Nancy's son Jim had traveled in his automobile when he had come to visit Aunt Nancy the summer before, with his wife and his two young boys. Another route from the place in Maine showed the way one would travel to go to Chicago. That was where Aunt Nancy's son Robert lived, with his wife, two small sons and a little daughter.

Angus liked to look at the map. Somehow it made "geography" seem real. Aunt Nancy told him about the five grandchildren, and showed him some wonderful pictures of California.

Angus had met some of the boys of the village. Ted Bunker, who had met him at the station when he arrived, had a younger brother, Ben, who was just the same age as Angus. Then there were Hal Twigg and Bob Macy and Dick Penney. The boys got together sometimes for ball games or other fun.

One day Hal said, "I tell you what let's do. Let's get up a zoo, same as Angus told us about." Angus had told the boys about the big zoo in Franklin Park, in Boston, where there were bears and bear cubs, and lions and tigers and elephants—and monkeys.

"How can we get up a zoo?" asked Dick, scornfully. "How can we get lions and tigers and—"

"Well, of course, I don't mean a real big zoo," explained Hal—"but, just for fun—get all the animals we can, and build cages for 'em. Maybe Mrs. Tilton would let us use her barn. We could borrow Dick's grandma's parrot—and we could put in our own pets. Ben's rabbits, and—maybe we could trap some beaver or foxes. And Angus could put Rags in a cage and put a sign on it, "Wild African Lion!"

Hal rolled over on his back in the grass, kicking his heels in the air, and laughing at the idea of friendly little Rags posing as a fierce lion in a cage.

The other boys laughed, too,—all but Angus. He grabbed the little dog closer to him. "I guess *not*!" he said indignantly. "You don't shut up *my* dog in any old cage! We won't have it, will we, Ragsy? Vote NO! Rags." And Ragsy wagged his tail and gave two or three funny little barks that Angus said meant "No—No—No."

"All right," grinned Hal cheerfully. "No zoo for Tuckaway, boys. Let's go swimming."

That evening, after supper, Angus and Aunt Nancy were sitting out on the porch, watching the sun set behind the distant mountains. The western sky was like a wonderful picture with cloud ships drifting by.

Angus told Aunt Nancy what Hal had said about having a zoo of pets and other animals "just for fun."

"I think he only meant we'd have it just a few days, like—like a dog show or a pet show," explained Angus. "And when we talked about it again, after

we'd been swimming, we all said we wouldn't like to have any pet animals shut up in little cages. Do you think it is right, Aunt Nancy?—in the real zoos, I mean?"

"I don't like to think about it," said Aunt Nancy gently. "It always makes me feel sorry to see any animal kept in a cage. And the animals that are in zoos and in the circus, have sometimes been captured in far-off countries and brought on long voyages in the dark holds of ships. Many that are captured die on the voyage, from lack of care or the crowded places with little fresh air, and narrow cages, and perhaps from fear or homesickness. Do you think it is fair to the animals. Angus?"

"No, I don't," replied the boy slowly. "I wouldn't like to be shut up in a cage, and I don't believe they do, either. I never thought about it before, though. You see," he went on, "at the zoo where we went the animals all had plenty of room, and the monkeys seemed to have a lot of fun playing around. And everyone says the keepers are very kind to them, and the animals have all they want to eat, and are taken care of in every way."

"But what *right* do we have to take them away from their own life, and keep them shut up all the rest of their days?" asked Aunt Nancy. "Why do people do such a thing?"

"It isn't *right*," decided the boy. "When I'm a man I'm going to try to get freedom for them, same as Lincoln did for the slaves."

The happy weeks of summer went by. Angus gained in weight and strength and his face was rosy and tanned. He went to school when it began in September. That meant lonesome hours at first for Rags. He missed the boys.

It was not long, however, before Rags, and three or four other dogs whose young masters were in the schoolroom, found out where it was that the boys went each day. For a time they kept friendly watch outside the closed doors, or went over at recess time, and had a romp when the boys came rushing out for play. Then, a few weeks later, something happened! Rags disappeared! No one knew where he was. He was gone two days, three days—a whole week went by and no jolly, happy, four-footed friend came rushing to meet Angus when school was out.

The boy searched everywhere, whistling and calling. The other boys hunted also. Aunt Nancy wrote out a notice for Angus to have pinned up on the wall in the postoffice and in the railroad station, describing Rags, and offering a reward. An advertisement was put in the county newspaper. But no one appeared to claim the reward. No one seemed to know anything at all of a dear Rags who meant so much to the boy.

The Boy Scouts even organized a hunt through the woods near the village. There was a terrible fear in Angus's heart that some careless driver might have been speeding in his motor car, and have run over and killed the dog. "If he's alive, he would come back to me, I *know* he would, Aunt Nancy," said the boy sadly. Aunt Nancy did the best she could to comfort Angus. "But he may be all right, Angus. He may have wandered off too far, and some kind family may have taken him in and kept him. Perhaps he doesn't know how to find his way back."

Now the truth of the matter was, that just at the

same time that Aunt Nancy and Angus were talking about Rags, the little dog was wearily plodding along a distant highway. He was alone. His coat was dusty and rumpled. His little legs were very tired. He could hardly drag himself along. But he was headed for home! He was on his way back to the master he loved with all the strength of a loyal, unselfish heart.

The day that Rags had first been missed by Angus, the dog had been strolling through the main street of the village, as he sometimes did. Two children who had been left alone in a fine motor car before one of the shops, had coaxed him into the car. Rags, always friendly, allowed the two little girls to play with him. "Let's take him home with us," said one of them. "He's a *nice* little dog."

"I don't believe mamma will let us," replied the other. "Sh—we'll hide him, and she won't know until it is too far to send him back."

They were ten miles away from Tuckaway before the lady in the front seat discovered that she had another passenger in the back seat. She scolded the children, but said, "I can't drive back with him now. You may keep him for a day or two, and if we drive this way again, we will remember to bring him back and leave him just where you found him."

It was a fifty-mile drive before they reached home! And they did not drive to Tuckaway again!

The family were kind enough to Rags—but he moped around, refused to play—would hardly eat anything at all. He wanted home and Angus and Aunt Nancy!

So at last the little dog slipped away. By some strange sense that people do not have, many dogs are able to find their way back home—even across rivers or mountains.

He had traveled a long way. He was tired and hungry but he kept on bravely. He was almost too tired to walk another step. Suddenly he paused and sniffed the air. Something frying did smell good! He could eat now that he knew he was on his way home. Someone had left his motorcycle by the side of the road, and was cooking his supper over a small alcohol lamp.

Rags went up to the man and looked at him with pleading eyes and a little wag of his tail. The man had been watching the dog as he plodded slowly up hill.

"Well, you *are* a tired little chap," said the man kindly. "Hungry, too?" He looked for the dog's collar but the children had taken it off. So the man could not learn the name of the dog's master or where he lived.

Rags and the man had supper together. They were a long way from any village or houses. The man, meaning to be kind to a lost, homeless dog, snuggled him inside his coat and carried him off, riding on the motorcycle, to the man's cabin, some distance away.

Two weeks later, Angus Gordon came rushing into the house, waving a letter above his head, and calling out excitedly: "Aunt Nancy! Rags is found!—RAGS IS FOUND! O, I am so glad!"

In his joyous excitement he put his arms around Aunt Nancy and gave her a big hug.

She turned around from the apple pie she was making, and beamed at Angus. "That's good!" she said heartily.

This was the letter that Angus received. (There were some misspelled words in the letter, but who

could think about that, when reading the glad news that Rags was found?)

Master Angus Gordon,
Tuckaway, Maine.
Dear Sir:

I read in the county paper that you lost a dog. I guess I have him. He looks just like the paper said. He didn't have any collar. When I read the notice in the paper I says to him: Are you Rags?—Rags? He nearly wagged his tail off. He was so pleased. Then I said to him: Do you know Angus? Angus Gordon?

And say, he was all over me in a minute as excited as he could be. He kept going to the door and scratching at it and looking back at me as much as to say, Let's go find him.

I can't leave my traps just now to take him to the railway station or I'd send him to you by Express. I'm in my hunting camp up in the woods. He's a fine little dog and I'd like to keep him but if he is your dog you can have him any time you come for him or I will send him to you as soon as I can go to town.

Respectfully,

R. ROGERSSON.

P. S.—I don't want any reward like the paper said. Rags is good company and I'm glad to have him.

Aunt Nancy wrote to Mr. Rogersson, thanking him for his kindness to Rags, and sending money to pay for sending the dog back to Tuckaway on the railroad train.

But next day came another letter from Mr. Rogersson. The letter said that Rags had disappeared again! "I don't know whether he has started off by himself to find his way home—or whether he got into some trouble in the woods," said the letter. "He liked it fine, and used to get so excited and happy when I took him into the woods with me and he could sniff all the strange smells or maybe chase squirrels or chipmunks. I'll do my best to find him for you. He's a good little dog and we are good pals."

Angus was in despair when he learned that his little friend was lost once more.

He pleaded so hard with Aunt Nancy to be allowed to go up to X—and help Mr. Rogersson hunt for Rags that at last Aunt Nancy, feeling that the boy would make himself really sick if he could do nothing but wait for news, said he might go. Angus was rather young to go alone, but he had traveled from Boston to Tuckaway by himself, and Mrs. Tilton felt sure she could trust him.

Mr. Rogersson was at the station to meet Angus, and took him to the camp at once. Next morning he asked Angus if he would like to go with him to visit the traps.

"I trap for fur, you know," he explained. "It is a little early in the season, but I've got two fine fox pelts already, and mink and a few others." He showed Angus the pelts that had been stripped from the dead animals and stretched on frames to dry.

Angus had, of course, seen many ladies in the city who wore fine furs. Sometimes they wore fox scarfs. Sometimes there were capes made from squirrel fur, or long coats made from other more costly fur. Someone had told Angus that a long coat made of costly ermine might mean that hundreds of little animals had been killed to get enough perfect furs to make just one coat for a wealthy woman.

Angus had often watched men and women and children feeding the squirrels on Boston Common. Many people would stop to watch the pretty sight. The squirrels would take a nut from a friendly hand. Sometimes one would run up an outstretched arm to get the nut that was laid on the man's shoulder. Then

Sir Squirrel would either sit up and nibble it daintily, or make a flying leap to the ground and scamper off to put the nut in some safe hiding place for winter.

Angus used to wonder how the ladies could like to pet and smile at some squirrels, and at the same time be willing that hundreds of other little furry animals should be killed to make coats or neck-pieces. Sometimes, when he saw a woman with a fine fox skin round her shoulders, he really wanted to say rudely, "O, why don't you go and kill your own cat and hang him round your neck?" But, of course, he never did.

"I go to the traps every day," explained Mr. Rogersson. "I don't want to think any animal suffers two or three days in a trap. But there is one trap that's rather off my regular line, and I haven't been there since Rags was lost. We'll go and look up that trap first."

Somehow Angus felt very unhappy and uncomfortable as he tramped through the lonely forest after Mr. Rogersson. The boy thought the hunter *looked* like such a kind man, with gentle blue eyes and a pleasant smile. How could he *like* to trap and kill animals?

They did not talk much on the way.

They found the trap, and it had sprung its cruel steel grip on a little four-footed creature. For two days and nights the poor animal had been held helpless, hungry, thirsty, and with an aching, swollen foreleg. And it was RAGS!

With an awful, choking cry, Angus hurried forward and knelt beside the suffering dog. "Rags—oh, my Rags!" and, big boy as he was, the tears came to his eyes and he sobbed as if his heart would break.

Rags knew his master—his dear Angus. He was almost too weak to do more than try feebly to lick the hand of his best friend.

The trapper gently released the little animal. "I wouldn't have had this happen for a hundred dollars," he said huskily. "Poor little dog!"

Angus looked up at the trapper with flashing eyes—but then he set his lips together firmly without a word.

They went back to the cabin, Angus carrying the dog in his arms. Rags' wounded leg was bathed and made as comfortable as possible and he was given some warm gruel and a soft bed.

The next day Mr. Rogersson took Angus and Rags to the train. He had said very little, for he saw how fiercely Angus blamed him for the accident to the little dog.

With good care from Aunt Nancy, the doctor, and Angus,—Rags recovered. Before Christmas he was running about almost as well as ever.

Two or three weeks after Rags had been brought back to Tuckaway, Angus received a letter from Mr. Rogersson. This was part of it:

"I've thought a lot about your fine little dog—and other animals—and I've made up my mind I'm going to earn a living some other way than trapping and killing wild creatures. I never thought much about it before—but—well—I'm not going to make *any* animal suffer as your little dog did."

And Angus found comfort in the thought that because of Rags there would be *some* wild animals saved from the cruel suffering of a steel trap.

Rags and Angus are both well and happy with dear Aunt Nancy Tilton in the pleasant home in Tuckaway.

Dear Members of the Kind Deeds Clubs:

Some of you will remember that three years ago there appeared in the KIND DEEDS MESSENGER a very beautiful story titled "The Farmer's Boy," written by a very popular humane author, Mrs. Anna Harris Smith. This story was the starting point for some very practical work which expressed in deeds the ideals which the clubs stand for. This practical work was to carry cheer at Thanksgiving and Christmas time to poor families, old people and shut-ins in institutions where it is so easy for them to be forgotten by the outside world. Thus originated our Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets, which have been such a joy to those lonely ones who during the time of our great festivals feel as at no other time, their apartness from the joy that others more fortunate are experiencing.

Could these dear souls ever express in words what it means to them to have brought to their bedsides or into their desolate homes a lovely basket trimmed with the pretty adornment of Christmas colors and bulging and fairly creaking with Christmas mysteries within? No, they cannot. So you, dear members, cannot know fully except through your imagination the joy that you have been the means of spreading, the blessings that you have bestowed. Many of you to do this have made little sacrifices you are not talking about, which makes your part the greater.

Of the one hundred and seven baskets which you have sent out this wonderful year, every member had some little thing to add, some thought for the happiness of others, something to share, and so, truly the Christmas spirit of good-will to all living beings was practically borne out in service where it would most count.

We in the office feel very proud of you and want to express to you all and to your teachers who have organized and led this splendid undertaking, our love and gratification. We hope that this school project will find in the future an ever-widening enthusiasm.

You will all be interested to know that one of the schools has adopted at Thanksgiving time the "thankful" project suggested by Miss Ida Kenniston through her story in the November issue of the KIND DEEDS MESSENGER. We find that we have such great big things to feel thankful for which we had really never realized before, because they are our day-by-day experiences.

In this school there were twenty-five "thankfuls" which the members thought of, of which the following are a few: "I am thankful for the good flag under which we live"; "I am thankful that I am able to work"; "I am thankful for good health"; "I am thankful that I am a member of the Kind Deeds Club"; "I am thankful that Lincoln freed the slaves"; "I am thankful that I have a pet"; "I am thankful for the birds because they eat the insects off the trees"; "I am thankful that I have a father and mother."

No storybook subject has ever gone over as successfully as this year's LIGHTFOOT THE DEER by Thornton Burgess, put into verse by the writer, Mrs. Dolores W. Kent. This has been carried before thousands of pupils by Mrs. Gwyn Tebault, whom you all know. One little boy writes: "Our Kind Deeds lady is a good story teller. She makes us feel that animals are our friends. I do not believe I will ever be a hunter and kill my own friends." We hope with all our hearts that you all feel this same way.

We leave you now with the hope that 1930 will be the best year yet in all our work and that it will bring the blessings of health and happiness to you—each one of you.

With the best of greetings yours,

EDITH LATHAM.

THE PLAY "VIRGINIA'S DREAM"

This beautiful play is now available and we strongly recommend it for school use as a most entertaining and instructive feature for "Be Kind to Animals Week."

The score is complete with music, songs and costume suggestions. For all details refer to the last issue of the KIND DEEDS MESSENGER.

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